



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CARDIN, MIKULSKI URGE ADMINISTRATION TO REDIRECT FLORIDA'S REJECTED HIGH-SPEED RAIL FUNDS TO NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

WASHINGTON – Today, **Senators Ben Cardin and Barbara A. Mikulski** (Both D-MD), joined with Senators Tom Carper (D-DE), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Chris Coons (D-DE), Kirsten E. Gillibrand (D-NY), John F. Kerry (D-MA), Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ), Joseph I. Lieberman (I-CT), and Robert Menendez (D-NJ), writing to U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood to request that the \$2.4 billion in High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program funds rejected by the State of Florida be redirected to high-speed rail projects on the Northeast Corridor. Secretary LaHood has stated that a new sponsor for the funds in Florida must be identified before March 4, 2011 or the funds will be redistributed to other states. The Senators noted that while the Northeast Corridor accounts for roughly one-fifth of the nation's gross domestic product and twenty percent of the nation's population and has the nation's only operating high-speed train, to date it has received less than two percent of the \$10.5 billion provided by Congress for the High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program.

"As we work to support job creation and economic growth, it is important that we make smart investments – like in our nation's transportation infrastructure – that will encourage future prosperity and ensure that America remains competitive in the global economy," **said the Senators.** "With its large population and high economic activity, the Northeast Corridor is well-positioned to lead the nation into the future of high-speed rail transportation. If another project sponsor in Florida is not found, our states stand ready to put the unwanted funds to good use to improve our existing high speed rail service, create jobs, and reduce congestion and air pollution."

A copy of the letter to the U.S. Department of Transportation follows:

February 25, 2011

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood,

In light of the State of Florida's decision to reject \$2.4 billion in High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program funds, we urge you to reprogram these funds to projects on the Northeast Corridor. Our states are ready to put these funds to good use to improve our existing high speed rail service, reduce congestion, and create jobs.

As you know, the Northeast Corridor is critically important to our nation's transportation infrastructure. The region served by the Corridor accounts for roughly one-fifth of the nation's gross domestic product and twenty percent of our nation's population. More than 250 million rail passengers use the Corridor annually and the Acela Express has built the foundation for high-speed rail service throughout the country. In a recent report, America 2050 rated the Northeast Corridor as the region with the greatest potential to attract high-speed rail ridership in the United States.

Improving passenger rail service on the Northeast Corridor is necessary to accommodate the sixty percent increase in passengers expected by 2030 and will alleviate severe congestion on the region's highways and airspace. At a time when numerous states have rejected federal funding from the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program, we note that high-speed rail's potential on the Northeast Corridor is proven. For example, ridership on the Acela Express has risen six hundred percent during its nine years of service.

Although the Northeast Corridor has the only operating high-speed train in the country, the Corridor has received less than two percent of the \$10.5 billion provided by Congress for the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program to date. We believe that this is an insufficient investment in the Northeast Corridor, given our region's position as a population and economic mega-region.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Tom Carper
Benjamin L. Cardin
Barbara A. Mikulski
John F. Kerry
Joseph I. Lieberman
Richard Blumenthal
Kirsten E. Gillibrand
Frank R. Lautenberg
Robert Menendez
Christopher A. Coons

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